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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States. By EMORY R. JOHNSON, T. W. VAN METRE, G. G. HUEBNER, and D. S. HANCHETT. Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1915. 2 vols.; 8vo., pp. xv+363; ix+398. Paper, \$6.00; cloth, \$7.00.

Since the announcement by the Carnegie Institution, something over a decade ago, of its plans for research in United States economic history, economists have looked forward with anticipation to the results which it was hoped might be obtained, with the financial aid thus afforded, in this broad field of investigation. While numerous articles and monographs thus started have already been published, this is the first volume to appear covering in a general way one of the twelve topics into which the subject as a whole has been divided.

The work on this division has been written by four authors. The subject is treated topically, the main headings being: foreign commerce, internal trade, the coastwise trade, the fisheries, and government aid and commercial policy. In the division of space between these topics foreign commerce receives nearly one-half the total, while internal trade receives less than one-fifth, and the fisheries a proportion which is only slightly smaller. There is a comprehensive and useful bibliography and several maps, but unfortunately no use has been made of the graphic method of statistical presentation, though the subject is one which affords unusual opportunities for its employment.

The reviewer assumes that in the case of a book put out by the aid and under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution a somewhat unusually high standard of achievement may be expected. It should be stated at the outset that the present study is certainly the best general account of the field covered that is available. And yet it is disappointing. The reasons for this can perhaps be classed under two general points of criticism, the first being the relatively large dependence upon secondary sources, the second being the method of organization and treatment of the subject-matter.

Taking up the first point, by far the greater portion of the material—the account of internal trade being the most important exception—

seems to have been obtained from secondary sources, and especially from the five published and three unpublished monographs noted in the preface as written by "collaborators," only one of whom, however, appears among the authors of this work. For example, in the first hundred pages covering colonial commerce down to the Revolution the number of footnote references to sources or contemporary works can be counted on the fingers of two hands. Doubtless others were used, but it is to be regretted that this was not more generally the case and that the results are not more in evidence. If this presentation is compared with the account of colonial manufactures in Clark's *History of Manufactures*, more recently issued under the same auspices, there certainly is a marked contrast in this respect—not to mention others. This criticism, however, would not hold true of all sections, notably the chapters dealing with the later history of the fisheries and the organization of commerce, and parts of the section dealing with government aid and commercial policy and of that dealing with internal trade.

This same defect also appears to be the chief explanation for the lack of proportion in the space assigned to the main topics. For, except on the basis of the availability or lack of secondary writings on the subjects, it is difficult to understand why internal trade, which, during the nineteenth century at least, was so vastly more important economically than foreign trade, receives less than half the space allotted to the latter and only a little more space than is given to the relatively insignificant fisheries. The subject of internal commerce presented the most difficult problem of all owing to its great scope, the scattered character of the available data, and the relative absence of previous investigation in this field. Presumably it is just to meet difficulties of this sort, more serious than the unaided individual can usually cope with, that the Carnegie Institution has attempted to aid this work. Certainly here was where assistance was most needed. Whether it was not forthcoming or was not availed of cannot be stated. But the result is that the account of internal commerce, the most important topic of all, while probably more original than the others, is also the least adequate and satisfactory.

The reviewer, however, does not wish to be understood as insisting that a general work of this type must be based even to only a slight extent on source material and original investigation. A book based entirely on secondary studies is frequently not only inevitable but highly desirable and may well receive aid. But such a book should carefully summarize, digest, organize, and correlate the existing studies,

so as to bring out the fundamental unity and the process of organic development underlying the whole. It is the deficiencies in these respects that constitute the second general point of criticism, and were it not for this second point the first point would carry far less weight.

The defects which can be classified under this second head are chiefly due to the method of organization chosen and to the fact that four different authors have been engaged upon the book. In a subject of this character a writer always finds himself confronted by a serious dilemma in the organization of the material. If the whole field is covered in chronological order, the sequential development of events in particular fields is likely to be lost sight of. On the other hand, if the topical method is followed exclusively, then the interrelation of the different factors and events is hard to bring out and the organic unity of the whole field of activity is seldom made clear. Under such circumstances the best way out of the dilemma seems to be a compromise whereby the history as a whole is divided into periods sufficiently short so that in the topical treatment the interrelations of each and the essential unity of the whole are clearly portrayed. The organization of this book, however, is based on the straight topical treatment, except for the period before 1789, where chapters on the coastwise trade and fisheries are adjoined to the section on foreign commerce, while internal trade seems to have been passed over as too insignificant to be described in detail. As a result of this method of organization carried out by several authors there is considerable repetition, occasional inconsistency, and a general lack of organic unity. For example, certain governmental activities affecting foreign commerce are described at the end of Volume II, while the actual history of the commerce is given in the first part of the volume. Why the topic of coastwise trade should be separated from internal trade is not clear. If the history is to be anything more than a mere statement of the facts of trade, and is to include an explanation of why commodities were sent from one section of the country to another and why they went overland rather than by sea or the reverse, then it involves in the case of each topic a knowledge of exactly the same general economic background, and economy of effort, as well as clarity and thoroughness of exposition, demands that the two be treated together. Without going into further details it may be said in general that the method of organization and variety of authorship result in a history which lacks coherence, careful organization, a thorough exposition of causal relationships, and a broad grasp of the essential unity of the whole and the underlying processes of evolutionary development.

That this review has been so exclusively devoted to adverse criticism is due to the hope that in future volumes of this most important series it may prove possible to avoid some of the difficulties which, to the reviewer, appear responsible for these defects. However, this should not blind us to the fact that the work is a distinctly useful one, even though it does not come up to the high expectations aroused in view of the circumstances and auspices under which it was put out.

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The Commonwealth of Nations. An Inquiry into the Nature of Citizenship in the British Empire and into the Mutual Relations of the Several Communities Thereof. Part I. Edited by L. CURTIS. New York: Macmillan, 1916. 8vo, pp. xviii + 722. \$2.50.

The Round Table groups, as they have come to be known informally, were formed in 1910 in various parts of the British Empire for the study of imperial problems. Apparently plentifully supplied with funds, they have carried on considerable propaganda of the Fabian type and have published in connection with their work a quarterly review, the *Round Table*. Mr. Lionel Curtis is the editor of the present study, which is issued as the first part of a comprehensive survey of the "nature of citizenship in the British Empire, and the mutual relations of the several communities thereof." Although expressly accepting entire responsibility for all the views contained therein, Mr. Curtis tells us, however, that the "main work is the work of various brains and pens" and that it was prepared in five instalments, circulated to the groups, and revised in the light of corrections and criticisms sent in. It represents, therefore, more truly than is usually the case, the considered views of the organization from which it emanates.

The imposing volume before us, however, is more of a compilation than a contribution. Over 700 pages in length, it is a skilful exploitation of historical material to enforce the particular Round Table point of view. Among the previous writers who are laid under tribute are Grote (*History of Greece*), Bryce (*Studies in History and Jurisprudence*), Dicey (chap. iv of *The Law of the Constitution* being reproduced complete), Hunter (*A History of British India*), Egerton (*A Short History of British Colonial Policy*), Beer (*The Origins of the British Colonial System, The Old Colonial System*), Keith (*Commercial Relations of England and Scotland 1603-*